

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRIDGETOWN 0103

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR,MOPS,PINR,PFOR

SUBJ: BARBADOS PRESS ON U.S. NAVY BASE

REFS: (A) DOD DIRECTIVE 5105.47 OF 15 JUL 75

(B) CINCLANT INSTRUCTION 5410.1 OF 15 SEPT 75

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1. THE BARBADOS WEEKLY NATION OF JANUARY 18 (ON THE STREET JANUARY 16) RAN A PIECE IN ITS CENTERFOLD CALLED "UNCLE SAM'S SLICE OF BARBADOS." IN IT, FOR THE FIRST TIME TO OUR KNOWLEDGE IN ANY PRESS ARTICLE ABOUT THE BASE, THE PURPOSE OF THE INSTALLATION IS STATED WITH SOME ACCURACY: "A LAND-BASED ELECTRONIC EYE-SPY."

2. IRONICALLY, CUBA'S USE OF BARBADOS FROM OCTOBER TO DECEMBER AS A TRANSIT STOP ON THE WAY TO ANGOLA SEEMS TO HAVE STIRRED INTEREST IN THE U.S. INSTALLATION. PRIMINEROL BARROW HAS BEEN PICKED UP ON HIS PRINCIPLE OF "NON-INTERFERENCE," UPON WHICH HE BASED HIS GOVERNMENT'S ORDER TO THE CUBANS TO STOP; AND HIS "FRIEND OF ALL, SATELLITE OF NONE" REMARK. DOES NOT THIS APPLY TO THE U.S. PRESENCE ON THE ISLAND, THIS AND AN EARLIER NATION ARTICLE ASK. COULD NOT THE EXISTENCE OF THE BASE INVOLVE BARBADOS UNWITTINGLY ON THE SIDE OF THE U.S. AND AGAINST THE ENEMIES

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OF THE U.S., IT IS FURTHER SUGGESTED.

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3. EXCERPTS OF THE LATEST NATION PIECE FOLLOW:

"BARBADIANS IN GENERAL HAVE HARDLY SHOWN MUCH INTEREST IN MATTERS OF A NATIONAL INTEREST FARLESS THOSE OF AN INTERNATIONAL NATURE. HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR THE EXPOSURE OF CUBAN TROOP MOVEMENTS THROUGH SEAWELL AIRPORT, THE REALITY OF WHAT'S GOING ON IN ANGOLA WOULD STILL BE AS DISTANT AS THE STARS FROM THE MINDS OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC.

"NOT SINCE THE DAYS OF WORLD WAR TWO WHEN A CABLE WAS SENT OFF WITH THE NOW FAMOUS WORDS "GO AHEAD BRITAIN, BARBADOS IS BEHIND YOU," HAS ANYTHING SEEMED TO ALERT THE ATTENTION OF THINKING BARBADIANS TO THE FACT THAT THIS ROCK IS NO LONGER AN ISLAND ALL BY ITSELF, BUT A VERY REAL PART OF THE WORLD..."

"NOW BARBADIANS LOOK AT THE ANGOLA DISPUTE AND ASK WHAT ACTION WOULD THE UNITED STATES HAVE TAKEN AGAINST BARBADOS HAD THE BARBADOS GOVERNMENT EXHIBITED SYMPATHY TOWARDS THE MPLA BY TURNING ITS BACK ON AMERICAN DEMANDS AND CONTINUING TO ALLOW CUBA TO MAINTAIN ITS SHUTTLE SERVICE THROUGH SEAWELL AIRPORT?

"SIMILARLY WHAT ACTION WOULD AN OPPOSING POWER TAKE AGAINST THE "FRIENDS OF ALL AND SATELLITES OF NONE" IN THE EVENT OF A MAJOR WAR WITH BARBADOS BEING SYMPATHETIC TO THE UNITED STATES BY ALLOWING THAT WORLD POWER TO MAINTAIN A NAVAL FACILITY ON ITS SHORES?

"THE GENERAL PUBLIC, IN ITS INNOCENT IGNORANCE, IS TOTALLY UNAWARE OF THE TRUE SIGNIFICANCE, IN INTERNATIONAL TERMS, OF THE PRESENCE IN OUR MIDST OF A SEGMENT OF THE UNITED STATES' MILITARY MIGHT.

"PERCHED ON A 100-FT BLUFF KNOWN AS THE LION'S HEAD AT HARRISON POINT IN ST. LUCY, THE UNITED STATES NAVAL FACILITY MAKES BARBADOS A STRATEGIC POINT OF THE HIGHEST PRIORITY
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IN ANY CONFLICT FOR WORLD DOMINATION BETWEEN EAST AND WEST.

"IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT NONE IN AUTHORITY HAVE EVER DEEMED IT NECESSARY TO QUESTION THE REAL PURPOSE BEHIND THIS FACILITY OR TRY TO FIND OUT WHAT REALLY GOES ON ON THIS SMALL PIECE OF AMERICAN, BARBED-WIRE EMBRACED, NO-TRESPASSING, PLOT OF ST. LUCY LAND.

"IF THE TRUTH WAS KNOWN, THE FACTS COULD BE MEAT FOR THE MOST ABSORBING JAMES BOND THRILLER OF ALL TIMES.

"FOR, UNLIKE WHAT MOST PEOPLE SUPPOSE, THIS IS NO SUMMER RESORT FOR AMERICAN NAVAL PERSONNEL. RATHER IT'S THE UNITED STATES' MOST PRIZED LAND-BASED ELECTRONIC EYE-SPY IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD.

"THIS IS NO ORDINARY NAVAL BASE, NO OUTPOST IN THE CARIBBEAN. IT'S TOO SMALL. ITS COMPLIMENT IS LESS THAN 200 MEN. NO SHIPS DOCK THERE, NO PLANES LAND THERE. THERE ARE NO FACILITIES FOR SUCH ACTIVITIES.

"THE REAL REASON BEHIND THE EXISTENCE OF THE FACILITY IN BARBADOS IS NOT FOUND IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING, WHERE DAILY BUSINESS ROUTINE IS CONDUCTED: NOT IN THE FREQUENT COMMUNITY PROJECTS AIMED AT CEMENTING GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN PERSONNEL AND THE BARBADIAN PUBLIC; NOT IN THE EMPLOYMENT OFFERED SOME JOBLESS BAJANS; NOT IN THE ADDITIONAL REVENUE GLEANED BY THE COUNTRY.....

"IT IS FOUND IN A RATHER LARGE, MAXIMUM SECURITY BUILDING LOCATED AT THE NORTHERN END OF THE FACILITY, SEPARATE FROM THE CLUSTER OF OTHER BUILDINGS.

"DESPITE ITS SIZE, ACCESS TO THIS TWO-STORIED BUILDING, COMMONLY REFERRED TO AS THE TERMINAL OR "T" BUILDING IS MADE POSSIBLE ONLY THROUGH TWO DOORS AND PERMITTED ONLY TO TAG-BEARING, AUTHORIZED AND SPECIALIZED PERSONNEL, WHO HAVE BEEN SWORN TO SECRECY.

"NO WINDOW DECORATES THE WALLS. AN IMPASSABLE BARBED-WIRE CROWNED FENCE, BELIEVED TO BE ELECTRIFIED AND WITH AN ELECTRICALLY OPERATED GATE, COMPLETELY SURROUNDS THIS AWESOME STRUCTURE WITH ITS MONASTIC TYPE APPEARANCE.

"BELIEVED TO BE EQUIPPED WITH SOME OF THE MOST ULTRA-MODERN AND SENSITIVE PIECES OF EQUIPMENT IN ELECTRONIC DEVELOPMENT, VITAL INFORMATION COLLECTED IS FED IN AND OUT THROUGH A MAZE OF TOWERING ANTENNAE WHICH ENCIRCLE THE WHOLE AREA LIKE A SPIDER'S WEB, ALONG WITH A MASSIVE UNDERWATER CABLE WHICH IS REPORTED TO LINK THE BASE WITH MIAMI VIA ANTIGUA AND PUERTO CONFIDENTIAL

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"HERE THEN IS THE HEART OF THE WHOLE SET-UP THROUGH WHICH COMMUNICATION OF EVERY DESCRIPTION IS DETECTED, COLLECTED, MONITORED, DECIPHERED, DECODED, TRANSLATED AND TRANSMITTED, IF WORTHWHILE, TO A HIGHER SOURCE.

"THE FACILITY ITSELF IS LIKE A COUNTRY WITHIN A COUNTRY. EXCEPT FOR THE LACK OF AN AIR OR SEA PORT, IT IS AS SELF-CONTAINED AS CAN BE, WITH ITS OWN RECREATIONAL AND SOCIAL FACILITIES INCLUDING A CINEMA AND A CLUB, ITS OWN FUEL SUPPLY, ITS OWN TRANSPORTATION, ITS OWN POWER PLANT, ITS OWN ELECTRICAL, MECHANICAL AND ALLIED SERVICES, ITS OWN SECURITY, ITS OWN CHURCH, ITS OWN ECONOMY, ITS OWN LAW AND EVEN ITS OWN PRISON.

"THE FACT REMAINS THAT, AS HAS BEEN PREVIOUSLY AIRED IN THE PRESS AND OTHRWISE, THE EXISTENCE OF SUCH A FACILITY IN BARBADOS MUST BE SEEN BY ANY POWER, UNFRIENDLY TO THE UNITED STATES AS

A THREAT, AN IRRITATION, A STUMBLING BLOCK AND ONE, IN THE EVENT OF INTERNATIONAL MILITARY CONFLICT, THAT MUST BE A PRIMARY TARGET FOR IMMEDIATE OBLITERATION.

"THE CUBAN TROOP MOVEMENT THROUGH BARBADOS GAVE RISE TO QUESTIONS ABOUT THE EFFICIENCY OF INTERNAL SECURITY IN THE CONTEXT OF SAFEGUARDING THE COUNTRY FROM POSSIBLE INVASION.

"HOWEVER, NO ONE SEEMS TO CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITY OF INVASION FROM WITHIN, GENERATING FROM THE NAVAL FACILITY IN THE CASE OF SOME SOCIAL OR POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT UNFAVOURABLE TO THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT.

"OBVIOUSLY THE 99-YEAR-LEASE OF LIFE GRANTED TO UNCLE SAM BY BARBADOS WOULD HAVE BEEN IMMEDIATELY THREATENED AND IT IS OBVIOUS THAT UNCLE SAM WOULD NOT BE WILLING TO SACRIFICE THE ADVANTAGES OF SUCH A STRATEGICALLY-LOCATED BASE AS THE NAVAL FACILITY."..... END UNCLASSIFIED

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4. COMMENT: AMBASSADOR VISTED WITH CO - NAVFAC AFTER ARTICLE APPEARED TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE IMPACT. (NOTE: REF A AND B DESIGNATES CO - NAVFAC BARBADOS AS US DEF REP FOR POST AREA. SECTION A (2) OF REF A HAS SPECIAL RELEVANCE TO THIS MATTER.) CO VIEWS ARTICLE AS "POSITIVE," ALTHOUGH STAND-OFFISH AND SOMEWHAT INACCURATE, HAVING BEEN WRITTEN BY REPORTER AL GILKES, WHOSE EARLY CHILDHOOD WAS SPENT IN AREA
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AS SON OF FORMER HARRISON POINT LIGHTHOUSE KEEPER. A JANUARY 15 ARTICLE ON US-BARBADOS RELATIONS BY REPORTER GLYNNE MURRAY IN THE MORE WIELY-READ ADVOCATE NEWS ALSO DEALT AT LENGTH WITH THE FACILITY. THAT ARTICLE EXPLAINED NATURE OF THE USG-GOB AGREEMENT, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE FACILITY, WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF RELATIONS DESCRIBED BY AMBASSADOR AS "STILL CORDIAL, HARMONIOUS." OVERALL, EMBASSY BELIEVES THE NATION ARTICLE WILL GENERATE SOME INTEREST AND DISCUSSION, BUT LITTLE RESENTMENT TOWARDS USG IN GENERAL, OR US NAVFAC, IN PARTICULAR. OF COURSE, CONTINUED DISCUSSION OF US MILITARY PRESENCE AND CRITICISM OF GOB FOR ITS ALLEGED SUBSERVIENCE TO USG COULD LEAD GOB TO TAKE POSITIONS LESS HELPFUL TO OUR INTERESTS IN FUTURE. END CONFIDENTIAL
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